

House Republican Press Release

June 23, 2004
Press Office: 860-240-8700

An End and A New Beginning



*By State Rep. Toni Boucher, R-143rd District,
Wilton, Norwalk*

After months of speculation, tension and embarrassment the state of Connecticut is breathing a collective sigh of relief. The Governor has resigned.

Almost everyone I meet is saddened that such a brilliant political career has come to such a tragic end. John Rowland was once the nation's youngest governor -- he was 37 when first elected in 1994 -- and considered a master politician. There is no denying that Governor Rowland will leave the state with an amazing record of accomplishments that have become national models, especially in the area of education, welfare and intercity reform. However, the personal tragedy of this once admired man is of a magnitude that will linger in our thoughts and prayers for some time to come.

Last week, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled that the Governor must testify before a legislative committee considering his impeachment, making him the first sitting chief executive in U.S. history ordered to appear before a legislative body.

He acknowledged his "lack of judgment led him to this day," after five months of unceasing calls for him to step down. This admission may be the beginning of a long awaited healing process for the Governor, his family and for our state.

Republicans and Democrats in my district should be commended for standing tall early in this historic process. The following excerpt, taken from the letter sent from our district on January 16th, was prophetic:

"After many long, thoughtful and painful discussions both town committees have asked for you to resign from the Office of Governor. They feel that by virtue of your own actions and admissions, you have lost the trust and confidence of the people. It is an expectation of all voters that the Office of Governor be led by a presence of honesty, integrity and ethical behavior. They expect this of their local, state and national office holders regardless of party affiliation. For the majority of the citizens the main issue is a matter of your word, not the proving of a criminal act or interpretation of the letter of the law. You have broken the trust of your constituents. Once that bond is broken it can rarely be re-established.

They have moved beyond the issue of guilt or innocence in criminal issues to whether you are a man in whom they can continue to place their trust to run this state”

During this difficult time, I have been particularly concerned about the message our young people were receiving as the Harford scene unfolded.

Abraham Lincoln stated that "Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."

They can now see that how one conducts oneself does count, that there are consequences. They should also note that most elected officials work hard and care deeply about the job they have been entrusted to do and respect the office they hold. This is especially true of our Lt. Governor.

Our great state will recover and move forward under the strong and gracious leadership of the Honorable M. Jodi Rell.

State Rep. Toni Boucher serves the 143rd Assembly District of Wilton and Norwalk in the state House of Representatives.